All food was also made up of the 4 elements. Here rice was of particular importance. The body was seen as built and maintained by rice. Flesh in fact was rice, an image probably derived from Buddhist scriptures.[11]

Each element carried with it its substantive aspect of heat, flowing, etc., and its astrological nature and relations. Elements could be compatible or incompatible with each other. Earth, water, wind, iron, and wood for instance were compatible. Gold "got along" with all elements. Fire, though, was incompatible with wind, water, and wood for it could destroy their proper proportion.

The effect of astral and planetary relationships at the moment of birth on one's constituent elements induced qualities of character.[12] Mind and body were a continuum. Because family members were born at different moments of time, intrafamilial temperamental differences were expected.[13] Persons made up of incompatible elements quarreled. Thus friction might occur between parents and children. For a husband and wife, who lived in especially close proximity, the constitutional elements were of special importance. Through marital relationships their elements were in physical contact. Consequently, in the old days, a couple contemplating marriage ascertained through their horoscopes the compatibility of their natal elements to determine whether they could live together without destroying each other. For instance, a girl with much fire in her make-up was easily angered and prone to fevers. She could not make a successful marriage with a boy with much wood.

Physiology

A single physiological process controlled the functioning of the body and the mind; i.e., the equilibrium of its elements. If the elements were in proper balance, proportion or harmony, a person was healthy; if an element were excessive or deficient,

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11. "This, my formed body, is composed of the 4 Elements, generated by Father and Mother, built up from rice, porridge and sour gruel," says the Buddha (Suriyabongse 1951:11).

12. Merit, the other determinant of character, is discussed in "Influences on Health" below.

13. Cf. the proverb "The joints (knots) on the same stem are nevertheless unequally spaced, so even brothers are of different minds," (Gerini 1904:10).

a condition which also affected the functioning of the others, he was ill or emotionally disturbed.[14] For example, dropsy, swelling, and yellow eyes came from excess water; cholera and constipation from earth mists. Wind and fire were the great trouble-makers.

Wind "was stronger than the other three elements." Either blowing wind or still air easily penetrated the skin and caused difficulties all the way from flatulence, stomach-ache and diarrhea to a minor head-ache and dizziness ("if wind whirls inside the body, the house swims around"); from incessant crying to serious interference with breathing, hence fainting and death. An accident, such as a cut or broken bone, disturbed, and might "let out," the air. Acute pain ensued if "rigidity" of earth, fire, or water interfered with the proper movements of the internal winds.

Anger and fever were both in the category of excess fire. Since fire was particularly implicated in disturbed social relations, coolness was emphasized as the desirable state of body and mind. The blessings for both sexes at birth and at the marriage ceremonies enjoined the individual to be "cool and happy." There was some evidence that cool natures were tender (on) natures. Since women by nature were assumed to be "tender," and men not, a difference in element constitution may have been sex-linked. However, everyone knew of women who were not tender. For persons abundantly endowed with fire, temper control through temperature control was a constant preoccupation, for the allowable margin of fluctuation was especially narrow.

Food occupied an especially important place in a person's welfare because food controlled the fire element.[15] The following material on diet is the background for some of the dietary injunctions during pregnancy and lactation.

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14. In view of Thailand's ancient Indian contacts, the parallels (and differences) between Bang Chan, and Hindu Ayurveda as described by Opler (1963:32-36), are noteworthy.

15. "What was drunk or eaten by its decaying created the fire element in the body" (Suriyabongse 1964:12).

261 262 753

Diet in Body Maintenance and Curing

Because food created fire, the daily diet could be a source of illness or a therapeutic means. Every food had known properties for heating or cooling, and for other effects as well. Guava fruit, alcohol, and turtle or cobra curry were heating. Eggs were cooling. Depending on the occasion, ice and iced concoctions were over-heating or over-cooling. They were always "dangerous during menstruation." Banana varied according to the variety: kluai hòm (fragrant banana) was undesirably cooling and caused either diarrhea or constipation (Hauck, 1959:27); kluai nam wâ was less deleterious (salaeng) while kluai khai was good for the sick or for parturients (Boonleng).

252 262 [758] [846]

Properties in food changed in cooking. Boiling made rice "ripe" (suk) and so available as nourishment (Anuman Rajadhon:77). Even the method of cooking varied the properties. For the sick and for parturients, the banana variety called kluai hak suk was good if baked, but not if cooked in syrup (Boonleng).

262 753 827

Some foods were "incompatible" with, and so aggravated, certain illnesses. Air-borne food in the form of smell was incompatible with, and compounded, a condition of wind excess. Death or blindness ensued. On the other hand, asafetida might be tied to the wrist of a new-born baby so that the smell, an established carminative, might cure the excess wind in his stomach manifested as flatulence.

262 [774] [782]

Beneficial foods were encouraged. Of all these none surpassed rice, the main sustenance of the body, "the only true food" (Yong Chutima, in Hauck, 1959:27) and source of "strength" to the farmer. Rice was a safe food. It never disturbed elements. Eating rice, as compared with meat, had no overtone of taking life. One could eat one's fill without any sin. Most of all, rice nourished the human khwan, for each grain contained a part of the khwan of the divine Rice Mother. Furthermore, any food offered ritually to a spirit or to make merit acquired strengthening properties, and was afterwards given to priests, children, or to the sick.

[776]

Foods with known dangers were avoided. "Kluai tâi" banana, a variety full of seeds, was never eaten because it contained a female ghost (phi)." Jackfruit was avoided by lactating women as a direct source of wind-excess. Fruit in general was not dangerous but "did not give enough strength for a rice farmer. It was all right for an orchardist."

People used their knowledge of food properties to ameliorate their physical condition. During lactation, for instance, women ate vegetables or not "depending on the condition of the baby," for breast milk was very easily affected by adverse properties. In the broader context of general dietary needs, people entertained ideas about the suitability of certain foods to certain ages, sexes, occupations, conditions, and occasions (Hauck, et al: 47-50). Nevertheless, persons often risked an undesirable effect in food for pleasure. The proper banana variety for ritual use was the tiny kluai nam, yet it was not planted much in Bang Chan because the people "did not like the taste." They substituted the "pleasant-tasting" kluai nam wā. Here orthodoxy came off second. The heat of alcoholic drink relished by men and older women often pressed the margin of safe temperature control. The cobra--turtle--or chicken--plus--alcohol feasts exemplified how readily the elders gambled even on the increment of sin from eating meat, or risked an over-heated temper, for the joy of eating such cherished delicacies.

Food dislikes, if temporary, reflected an imbalance of elements; if usual, an individual constitutional set of the person's elements. To eat disliked food was therefore positively harmful. To urge someone to eat disliked food was wrong.[16]

Illness

All illness, anxiety, and soul loss was caused by intrusions from outside the body. The intrusion might be from a supernatural source (wisāt:powerful) or natural (tām thammachāt) (Textor:10) but in either case the result was the same: disruption of the elements. Anxiety, whether caused by a social situation such as fear of frustration, by a broken bone or by a fever, also was a disruption of balance. An attack by the supernatural disease missile, "khun"[17] gave rise to the classic symptoms of wind-excess: "a man cried all the time and had flatulency." Elements were also disorganized by spirit attack. The victim suffered hysteria, paroxysm, flatulence, convulsion,

16. Phillips (p. 65) reported that parents did not give their child a disliked medicine because "it offends him.... It is better not to give it to him than hurt his feelings."

17. This small skin missile invaded the body and then expanded to the size of a buffalo. Intentional attack (sorcery) might kill; accidental, merely pained (cf. Textor:116-127). Suspected khun was one of the few reasons why a family would authorize so grave a violation of the body of a deceased member as an autopsy.

828 or fainting, and also such localized trauma as abcesses.
753 Similar behavior followed the influence of malevolent magical amulets, incantations, and love magic. Natural intrusions may be exemplified by the seasonal influences of rain, which brought on too much water element; of heat, which increased fire; and of wind, which cooled too much or brought in certain fevers, e.g. north fever (khai nüa). An accident was a natural cause of disequilibrium. A cut might let out the air or a soul.

774 Any lost soul, if not restored, meant death. Souls were
[761] lost from falls or frights or from spirit attack, a condition
[953] recognized by persistent crying, hysteria, and unconsciousness. The exits were at the top of the head, the palms of the hands, and the soles of the feet, the latter 2 sometimes localized at the 2 thumbs and the 2 great toes. One of the old beliefs associated an element with one of the four čhĕttaphūt souls (Textor:130). When one of these souls was lost one whole element was gone. Loss of the khwan soul was more frequent than any other, especially during childhood. Its care
[844] throughout life was very much in mind. The khwan[18] played an especially prominent part during childbirth.

765 If a person were only slightly sick, he might first try
[262] to overcome his physical complaint by attention to diet.
[757] Very rarely did he by himself buy some medicine at a drug store. If it were a case of a child's lost khwan, women performed the rite for its recovery. When the khwan of an adult was affected, men performed a strengthening rite (thăm khwan), or a priest gave a holy water bath. If the person were very ill, holy cotton thread (săi sin) was tied at wrist, ankle, and neck so as to shut off the soul exits. An elder relative or spouse might also "bon," i.e. vow food or liquor in return for the help of supernatural beings; or, with Buddhist "sacred things" in mind, promise the ordination of the afflicted person, or oneself, or some interested relative. In this case, the relatives had long since turned for help from the arts of medicine.

278 The Arts of Medicine
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Medical knowledge comprised on the one hand a pharmacology of materia medica, and on the other, the far more important

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18. The conceptualization of this soul was Brahmanic in source, rather than Buddhist (cf. Martini's, 1952:370).

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775 Man was higher on the scale than woman.[20] Progress toward
[562] Nipphan was not assured but had to be earned. With sinful
behavior a person might be catapulted back to being a beast.
He who stole would "be born and die 500 times before he could
even grow up." Almost everyone had to be sent to purgatory
[776] where demons carried on tortures until he had suffered enough
to be released for rebirth. The evil spirits (phī) that
wandered frighteningly in Bang Chan were part of the legions
whose job was to increase deserved suffering on this earth.

771 The people of Bang Chan felt they could discern even
782 of themselves who was meritful and who was not according to
828 human circumstances, constitution, and behavior. A meritor-
ious person was healthy, happy, and successful in all under-
takings. He enjoyed good health and long life, a kindly
personality, many fine children, wealth, high status,
intelligence, and luck. Astrologically, he was born on a day
[775] of good confluences, of gold and auspicious signs. He who
lacked merit, because of sins committed perhaps many ages
ago, was born on an unfortunate day. He suffered early death,
deformities, unhappiness, poverty, and had a cruel nature.
[753] Illness, whether supernatural or natural, whether induced by
wind or sorcery or what, struck as part of the suffering
brought on by former sin. It was accepted in the conviction
that whoever suffered had brought it on himself. When merit
ran out, or when sin cancelled out and then exceeded one's
merit, suffering and premature death occurred, despite all
human efforts. Because of the prevalence of illness and of
life's difficulties, major and minor, no one, no matter how
outwardly fortunate and so evidently meritorious, had at
this earthly level of existence enough merit to escape some
suffering and frustration. By the same token, though, no
person was without hope. By making merit or by suffering in
this life, existence would be happier in the next. The mak-
ing of merit was in the forefront of daily conscious effort
and even conversations of the people of Bang Chan.

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780 The long-range protection against all illness was to
[577] live virtuously and make merit. However, to guard against
[782] temporary supernatural intrusions, everyone possessed and
[304] usually wore Buddha lockets and other amulets. Some
underwent tatooing, men having Cambodian or other figures,
women, 2 small dots tatooed on the torso under the arm.

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20. Men had achieved greater "other-worldliness" while women were more bound by the phenomena of the flesh (cf. Kirsch, 1961).

On the other hand, pregnancy was a period of uncertainty when a woman was easily upset emotionally. Because childbirth was "like a war" when a woman might die, "defeated by her pregnancy"(phaethong), she felt uneasy.[24] If she were frightened, her child's khwan would fly off in terror. The baby died in the womb if its khwan did not return. Because of increased sensitivity and vulnerability her elements and those of the baby were frequently thrown off balance. Wind easily entered through the thin skin of her stomach where she carried the unborn child. It caused pre-natal disorders all the way from queasiness and minor vomiting in early pregnancy to miscarriage and death. "A woman felt dizziness and numbness because of wind in the fetus. In a month she suffered a miscarriage."

A pre-natal pain that did not seem to be a labor-pain was diagnosed as the very dangerous naem, "a thick lump of blood and wind that moved quickly." As in other illnesses, element harmony was restored by medicines, holy water, and by modifications of diet.

Women knew of possible supernatural invasions of the womb during pregnancy. If a woman had beforehand lost a baby at birth or through miscarriage, and the body had not been properly buried, she might be seriously troubled by its restless ghost, fully as powerful, it must be remembered, as an adult's.

24. The image of battle was traditional (cf. Anuman Rajadhon: 108). Phaethong (McF: 599), a combination of food craving and vomiting (Anuman Rajadhon:115) paralleled the dola-duka of Ceylon (cf. Obeyesekere), but without the hostilities built in by the Sinhalese.

843 [795] She might also be troubled by the ghost of anyone who had died violently. This ghost, a phī tai thang klom, caused "the worst of all possible deaths." The phi krasū spirit,[25] entering through her anus, also might cause death by consuming her faeces, organs or the child's entrails. It was more dangerous during and after childbirth than during pregnancy (Textor:304-320). The [753] supernatural disease missile called "khun" might also strike. "If the mother is under 9 months pregnant, the baby inside can protect (itself). If this happens during the ninth month, the doctor uses holy water to extract it at the time of birth." Khun was recognized by "extra pain [751] occurring just before the baby comes out." To protect themselves, women wore extra talismans or had 2 dots [304] tattooed under the arm.

843 845 There was no assumption that what was born was inevitably to be human. When people said of a woman who had died pregnant, "the child ate the mother;" or, at a miscarriage, "the mother ate her child," or if many of a couple's children died, "they eat their children," the charge might be merely the comment of a vituperous neighbor, but the reality of vicious, autonomous beings, human or otherwise, in the womb was unmistakable. A certain woman died pregnant. The fetus, removed surgically, was observed to have 2 visible teeth, which indicated it was a non-human, yak (giant). However, a child might also be the soul of an angel in the form of a falling star that entered the womb in the advanced stages of pregnancy. "If such a baby lives it is pure and is a very wonderful child." Episodes were described of women giving birth to "gold," "jewels," "a monkey," "a fish's stomach," and a mouse-like "Golden Child." Sometimes these

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[771] [783] [514] [262] 25. This spirit ate like a dog, not like a human being, in eating faeces and putrid meat (McF.46). No revulsion nor idea of filth and contamination was found in Bang Chan's attitudes about faeces or urine. The infant in the womb sat peaceably on the mother's faeces. It was lucky to dream of faeces. In daily life human and animal excretions, like sins at the festival of Loy Krataung, were carried away by the canal waters. Bang Chan Buddhists recognized a need for cleansing, but not for purification. Since neither faeces nor sins were filthy the water was not contaminated. Even putrid meat was not disgusting in the context of the perishability of the flesh, but as food it was revolting. Muslims, however, had built in contamination to their concept of sin, so required purification.

the fire for her during the first day or so, lest in her straining, Dūan's womb "move to a new place," but Duan did it herself thereafter. The smoke was harder on others than for her for she was on the floor. She could leave the plank to bathe and to relieve herself through a crack in the floor. As soon as Chāi got over being frightened of her turmeric-yellow stomach, he often came and lay beside her on the plank, though it was a squeeze! She took her medicine and often sipped hot water, feeling very modern with her brand-new thermos bottle. Constantly turning her back or front to the fire, she poked or dripped water on the flames to make coals. Once she tossed on a dry palm leaf, and as it flared up, put a cloth over her head to trap the smoke and heat. Though a rash developed on her body, she was complimented by Lek on the care she was taking of the heating and drying process. Unfortunately, a neighbor who wanted to help brought in some of the wood one day. Not remembering that to make noise with the wood caused diseased red eyes in the baby, she dropped the bundle with a crash! Alas, "sang" disease, of course, came at once. So the near-by mō who always cared for them had to be called, but he used no medicine. "For eyes red from 'sang'," he said, "never use any eye-medicine as drops, or they will be permanently damaged or blind. Such eyes have not enough resistance to win over the strength of the medicine. A drop of mother's milk, any mother's, in the eyes is the cure."

Uterus pain was said to last one day for the first child, 2 days for the second, and so forth, increasingly. As Dūan seemed to be in considerable pain, Lek resorted to an old cure: she secretly took the bamboo knife and the phlai from the baby's tray and put them under Duan's plank bed without telling her. Slowly the pain diminshed.

If anyone spoke of uterus pain to her during the fire period, Dūan would suffer still more. If a visitor spoke of the hotness of the fire, little boils would appear on her body. The fire, being thus made too hot, would have to be put out, and Duan "would be weak for a long time." This was because actions or even words occurring beside the holy fire set a new and permanent pattern. Neighbor's children were kept away lest they inadvertently exclaim about the heat.

A few relatives with gifts of banana, turmeric, and face powder dropped in, but visitors mostly stayed away. "It is an ugly sight," said Dūan, "lying here with only a cloth over me, half naked and yellow, and I fear there might be an unpleasant smell."

The winnowing tray, with the baby on a pillow now covered with a plastic cloth, rested on a low table, the legs of which stood in bowls of water to keep away ants. At first an old dome-shaped fish trap had been set over it to prevent draft and

846 [789] Seven days after the end of the fire period, Dūan sent a message to the mɔ̄ to look in his book as to what direction from the house she should bury the phlai, the bamboo knife, and the pot with the now dried placenta and cord. She already knew some of the procedure: burying should take place on a Monday or a Friday; south was right during the first three months of the lunar calendar, November, December, January; and the full moon of the twelfth month (October) was especially good, for the moon waned thereafter. Chāi had been born in October, so north was right for him, but for a girl it would have been east. Song or Lek or anyone could bury the pot, but most mothers did it themselves. If it were buried in the wrong direction, the baby would die, and if not under a tree, he would leave them and their home, and roam. The instructions came. With the things in her hand, she walked toward a big jackfruit tree. Beside it was a sakēe. Either was good, so she chose the sakēe which, being nearer the house, might strengthen by that much the roots that would keep her boy at home. After burying the pot and all, she returned directly to the house, remembering to pick, as she came, a fruit, a vegetable, a leaf, and then a piece of wood, all useful things. In the house she added them to the usual household stores. By doing so, and by using them up shortly, she ensured that her new son would be a good worker, who on returning home would always bring something to add to the requirements and wealth of the household. Once buried, the placenta, "like ashes," was ignored and the spot forgotten.

846 262 [461] [753] [757] 862 Within a month after childbirth, Dūan was back at farm work, even to the back-straining pounding of rice in the big mortar. For three months she avoided fruits, particularly guava and jackfruit. Then, since the baby was thin, she gave up vegetables, especially gourds, corn, and the green plants that grew in the canal. One day, because she carelessly ate some salted field crabs, the baby got thrush on its tongue. They cured him by smearing the milky juice of a peel of klūai nɛ̄m banana on the cloth sheet covering his cushion, then wiping this on his tongue (cf. Anuman Rajadhon 1961:153). So the year passed, and then another. Not long after his third birthday, Dūan realized she was pregnant again, so took steps to wean him. She painted her nipples with "black medicine" (yā dam), a bitter and hot tasting ointment made from the boraphed rhizome (McF; 474). Then she sent the child over to her mother's older sister's house for four nights. To make quite sure, she followed an old ritual way, too. She boiled an egg hard and peeled it. Holding the egg behind her back, she turned her face away from her son, and handed it to him behind her so that she could not see his face. "Henceforth, you shall not nurse any more," she said. Without looking at him, she walked

846 789 372 [753] [755]

Even after the child was out, the pile of wood was still a drying womb to be treated carefully. It was also the wood for a consecrated fire. To drop a piece of this wood carelessly both injured and desecrated. If this happened a disease of the eyes "sang," came at once for which no male medical powers had any remedy. The only cure was in women's hands, that essence of maternity, "a drop of mother's milk--any mother's." The larger implications of this linking of fire and maternity are dealt with in the next section.

The Fire of Maturity

846 372 [885]

In the events surrounding the birth of the child, the significant step for the woman personally was the post-partum rest period by the fire (yū fai). Far more was at stake than just drying the uterus. The fire rest was one of the series of rites of the life-cycle which marked the course of an individual from birth to death. The others were the cutting of the umbilical cord, first head shaving, top-knot tonsure, ordination (for men), marriage, and cremation. Through the consecrated fire a woman formally achieved full maturity: she became suk (cooked, ripe, mature). Maturity did not come just by bearing a child. The fire brought about the transformation.[46]

562 [774]

How was mature womanhood viewed? What was the essential female role and office? Bang Chan saw a woman as one who "feeds and lengthens lives." As the custodian of growth she was, first, the guardian of the vital, essential khwan soul, and especially of the immature, flighty khwan of growing persons.

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Secondly, a woman was a donor of nourishment (liang).[47] Her primary responsibility was to nurture children and other tender beings. She nourished the fetus with her blood. After

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46. "The fiery element digests what is eaten or drunk...and cooks the body and gives it its beauty of complexion. And the body thus cooked is kept free from decay" (Warren:157-158).

47. All the deities "concerned with the welfare of our bodies and our khwan" were maternal (Mae), e.g. Rice, Water, Earth, "Mother-Goddess" (Mae Sū), and several Mother-Princesses (Chao Mae). Fire, and maybe wind, were both female (mae) and male (phra) (Textor:485). To these deities, "higher" than ordinary spirits, Bang Chan "owed more." [776]

Chapter VII

ATTITUDES TOWARD MODERN MEDICINE AND MIDWIFERY

753 178

Modern and traditional medicine appeared to Bang Chan to have much in common. Both subscribed to a belief in disruptive intrusions. In typhoid and cholera, the old scheme postulated intrusions of fire and earth. Boils involved a spirit attack or excess of fire. For these same disorders, new medicine spoke instead of virus or bacterial infection. Such concepts as nutritional deficiencies, insect transmission, and pollution, however, were alien to the old views as disease agents.

757 178 [755]

Modern medicines paralleled the old decoctions. Antibiotics, ointments, or pain-pills were appreciated for their efficacy, but evoked no surprise, for every plant in the world was said to have some therapeutic value. Injections were similar to the sub-cutaneous magical protective needle.

75 178 [164]

"Old" medicine did not feel threatened because people were not convinced that the modern was better. The 2 systems were viewed as different, each having its own specialties. The difference was sometimes phrased as "Old medicine cares for old ailments, modern medicine for new ones." Spirit possession and khun attack, for instance, were old ailments; poliomyelitis, gonorrhea, and maybe diphtheria, new (J.R. Hanks, 1955:155-195). It was sometimes better not to claim competence outside these customary lines. One mō said he could cure gonorrhea, but the young men preferred a city doctor. Sometimes, though, one could not be sure what was a new disease.

75 829 178 377 756 758 846 178 184

Another phrasing of the proper place for modern medicine was that because of varying "habit," differing social stations required differing medical techniques. "Modern medicine is only good for delicate city people or other kinds of farmers, but does not give enough strength for rice-farmers." The orchardists below Bangkok who "had the habit of eating a lot of fruit," and the teachers and traders of Bang Chan (who went to the second class practitioners, and occasionally to modern doctors) were assumed to have different physical needs than farmers. The post-partum fire was clung to as strength-making: "woman are weak if no fire." The hot ashes chamber, introduced from Bangkok, was for the most part used by non-farm women.

262 curtailed. About half ate soupy rice rather than rice as
843 usually prepared. All ate fish, but over half ate salted
846 fish only, and about one-fourth ate fresh fish only. Rice and fish were apparently the only foods considered safe by all of these mothers. The only other food eaten by half or more of them was banana of the (4)nam-(4)waa variety, baked bananas being commonly specified. Vegetables, when they were eaten, were usually in (1)kaeaeng (1)liang, a broth made with dried fish, and reputed to be valuable for milk stimulation. In Bang Chan, the inflorescence of banana was commonly used in making this product, but other vegetables were favored by some. When asked what foods they considered good for a woman who had recently borne a child, no mother knew of any such food, but the list of foods mentioned as being bad for the mother during the post-partum rest period included more than a dozen items mentioned from 1 to 4 times each: egg, sweets, beef, vegetables, meat, pork, poultry, fresh fish, sour tasting foods, jackfruit, mangoes, fruits of all kinds, and glutinous rice.

262 Fear of illness from eating incompatible foods after
846 child birth was rather strongly expressed by many informants,
753 even by some who knew of Chinese customs which were different
829 from the ancient Thai customs. Some also knew that foods which were customarily forbidden to the woman who had her child at home in the village, were not forbidden at the government health and maternity center at Minburi.

126 The 45 mothers who were interviewed during lactation,
262 but after work had been resumed, ate more nearly the usual
846 diet than was the case during the post-partum rest period. As in pregnancy, the mothers apparently had no notion of special dietary needs during lactation, but foods considered undesirable during lactation were mentioned 27 times. The list included 12 kinds of food, and four attributes of food, i.e. sour and hot tastes, fermented foods and raw foods. No food was considered harmful by a majority of mothers, the one which occurred most frequently, jackfruit, being mentioned by 8 only of the 45 informants.

262 Reasons were seldom advanced for considering various
753 foods unsuitable for mothers or children. During pregnancy,
853 the hot-tasting foods, i.e. those made with chili, were said by one informant to injure the baby's complexion. When asked at what age a child could have adult food, mothers might say at one or two years, but often specified without giving a reason, that the child could have anything but the hot-tasting foods. A reason given for omitting jackfruit from the diet during lactation was that it would cause diarrhea in the baby. One informant said that if a mother nursing a young baby, 1 or 2 months old, ate fresh vegetables, the baby would have diarrhea. Some informants said the "fragrant banana"[1] caused

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1. The type of banana most familiar to people in the United States.

262 constipation in infants, others that it caused diarrhea, whether
763 eaten directly by the infant or by the mother.
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The belief that eggs would cause dental caries, and should therefore be omitted from children's diets, was expressed by the mother in a poorly nourished family. The possibility that such ideas arose from unwillingness to spend much money on food for a child has already been noted (see p. 42).

262 Information on food suitable in illness was obtained
763 only incidentally. The Thai did not appear to have a consis-
758 tent theory as to the cause of disease (Sharp et al. 1956, p. 489), and residents of Bang Chan did not seem to associate any of their illnesses with contaminated food or water. Choice of food in illness was probably associated in some instances with the idea that the body is composed of the four elements: wind, water, fire and earth, and that sickness results from or is a symptom of imbalance in the proportions or arrangement of these elements. Thus the "fragrant banana" and eggs, because of their "cooling effect," were said to be forbidden in measles. A child who was getting measles was restricted to rice and dried fish. In contrast the small, [853] rather flavorless banana, designated (3)kluaj (4)nam-(4)[illegible]a, was said to have "no cooling effect" and was considered an acceptable food in illness, as well as for newborn infants.

262 In one instance, when a patient had been taken to the
758 hospital with severe diarrhea, a nurse instructed other family
784 members not to eat ices, syrup (see p. 36), or raw vegetables, nor to drink unboiled water. The informant who told us about this offered no reason for these precautions. These foods were simply "forbidden" to the family of a patient with severe diarrhea.

777 Notions as to what is fortunate or unfortunate may also
824 affect agricultural processes. The many ceremonies associated
245 with culture and use of rice have been mentioned (p. 42). The idea that a papaya tree growing near the house was "unlucky" was attributed to Thai by a young Thai Moslem in Bang Chan. When we commented on the papaya tree near his front door, he said the papaya tree dies easily and does not like water, but his was planted on high ground. According to this informant few villagers would be willing to grow papaya trees near the house. He considered the non-specific threat of harm as unreasonable, though he said that if specific harm were said to [777] result, he would be concerned about it. The midwife at Minburi Health Center said that she urged each woman who came there for delivery to have more banana, mango and papaya trees planted for home use. Before raising of papayas can be successfully encouraged, however, the idea that papaya trees bring back luck must be overcome.

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252 One other aspect of (l)ngaan which should be mentioned
796 in connection with food and health is the opportunity for con-
751 tamination of food. The villagers did not associate sanitation
[751 with health, hence the hazards of a community meal which many persons helped to prepare were many. Two incidents observed the day before an ordination in early April, will illustrate. In the final stage of making Chinese noodles, rice flour paste was extruded through a perforated disk into an enormous pot of boiling water. When done, the product was removed with a fish net, and plunged into the canal to cool, after which women helpers spread it out on banana-leaf covered trays. Dishes were also washed before use in the canal, which was then too low for boats. Since, however, many people drank untreated canal water at this season (see p. 28), the added hazards for the participants caused by these procedures may have been slight.

262 In summary, food plays a major role in ceremonies and
792 festivities, which are concentrated in the 3 months' dry season. Proposals for dietary improvement in Bang Chan must take into account not only the possible effects of the (l)ngaan season on the total nutrient intake, and on opportunity for exposure to contaminated food, but also the importance of these affairs from the standpoint of merit and prestige, and the relatively great financial burdens which villagers therefore undertake because of them.

QUANTITATIVE DIETARY STUDY: FOODS EATEN AND ESTIMATED NUTRIENT INTAKE OF SELECTED FAMILIES IN BANG CHAN

Procedure

121 Selection of the Sample
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146 Medical inspection designed primarily to discover possible signs of nutritional deficiency was carried out in advance of the family dietary study. The suggestion of Grant (1948) that matched groups, of contrasting economic or other status be studied, appeared to be appropriate to the situation in Bang Chan. Our hope was to be able to select from the random sample of families given medical inspection (Hauck, 1956) a group of families (A) in each of which several members had clinical signs which might be evidence of malnutrition, and a group of families similar in age and sex distribution (B) in each of which the members were largely or wholly free from such signs.

125 When the medical inspection of the random sample was
146 complete, however, too few of the families were found to meet our criteria for inclusion in Group A, i.e. the group of apparently less well nourished families. Additional families for

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843 Reasons were seldom advanced for considering certain foods unsuitable for mothers or children. During pregnancy the hot-tasting foods, i.e. those made with chili, were said by one
262 informant to injure the baby's complexion. When asked at what
855 age a child could have adult food, mothers might say at one or two years but often specified, without giving a reason, that
953 they could have anything but the "hot-tasting" foods (foods seasoned with chili). Two mothers said the child could have "hot tastes" at one year, whereas one said not until the child was 3 years old. A majority did not specifically mention hot tasting foods either to include or to exclude them.

853 A reason given for omitting jackfruit from the diet during lactation was that it would cause diarrhea in the baby. One informant said that if a mother nursing a young baby 1 or 2 months old ate fresh vegetables, the baby would have diarrhea. Some informants said the "fragrant banana", (3)kluaj (5)hauaum[1], caused constipation in infants, others that it caused diarrhea, whether eaten directly by the infant or by the mother.

• 953 The belief that eggs would cause dental caries and should
262 therefore be omitted from children's diets was expressed by the
853 mother in a poorly nourished family of low economic status.
855

862 Opinions varied as to when children could be given "adult food". This was often, but not always, the age considered appropriate for weaning. As the question was worded it apparently implied that the child "could eat food as prepared for adults in the family" and did not necessarily exclude breast feeding, since children who "could have adult food" might still be nursing. The age at which a child could have adult food was sometimes related to stage of maturity as "when he can sit", "when he has teeth", or "when he can say (1)plaa (fish)".

262 Traditional and Modern Concepts of Rice Versus "With-Rice" in the Diet. - Rice is not only the basis of the adult diet in Thailand, but it has traditionally been regarded as the strength giving food par excellence. A portion of Chutima's (1939) description of the "old system" of diet follows:

> "Our children and young women are forbidden by ancient doctrine from eating any fair quantity of animal products, but must eat plenty of rice which is considered as the only true food, the others being only appetizers. And to stimulate the palate, large quantities of hot and irritating condiments (chilies and peppers principally) are consumed at every meal.

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1. The type of banana most familiar to people in the U.S.A.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

were at first a series of unrelated incidents—that is, the possible tenuousness of the links between parent and child first came to my attention with the occasional, but wholly unselfconscious, reports from informants on what to my Western ears seemed like rather turbulent childhoods: their frequent movement from family to family while they were still children and their own care, as adults, of friends' or relatives' children. (This suspicion was reinforced and partially verified later while recording life histories). Later it was noticed that, in sharp contrast to the West, villagers tend to be less concerned about the illness of children than the illness of adults; informants with whom this observation was discussed said either that they had not noticed or explained it by saying that since children recover so quickly from sickness there is less need to worry about them. Finally and perhaps most important, it became clear that the request of the villager who stopped me and asked me to take and rear her child was by no means idiosyncratic; the request was made on four separate occasions by different individuals, both within and without Bang Chan. The intent of these requests were difficult to ascertain. Since the requests tended to come up rather suddenly, in the presence of the child, and were always accompanied by laughter, they may well have been said in "jest" or as a threat to the child. On a few occasions the parent took pains to be sure the child understood what was being said, in which case the child responded with screaming. Also, Europeans have traditionally been used as bogey men in the disciplining of children. (I myself have occasionally been addressed as a malevolent spirit by youngsters.) On the other hand, because children of poor families have been known to be given to individuals of high status, and because Occidentals are automatically assigned such status, it is not altogether unlikely that the parent was sounding me out as a potential patron of the child.

The problem with all the above, however, is that it was unknown to what extent they represented typical or deviant attitudes and responses. The Sentence Completion item, *"We want to give our child to him because . . ."* was selected for use in the SCT administered to a larger, representative sample of villagers because, being an extreme phrasing of these attitudes, it might shed light on the villagers' general readiness to accept them as well as their justifications for them. Of the fifty-six informants who responded to the item, 79 percent accepted the premise and 21 percent rejected it, *i.e.*, "I do not want to give my child to anybody." Of the forty-five individuals who accepted the premise, nineteen said it was good for either the child or the parent, *i.e.*, "that person was good, and he wanted that person to teach his child to be good"; "I would get some money by giving it away"; "I could not stand the child anymore." And eighteen said it was justifiable, *i.e.*, "because of poverty"; "I did not have the means to rear the child."